NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING CORPORATION

1. OVERVIEW

MISSION

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWTHC) provides access to adequate, suitable and affordable housing. Through the provision of housing programs and services, the NWTHC contributes to the health and education of our people and to the development of sustainable, vibrant and safe communities.

GOALS

1. Increase the supply of adequate, suitable and affordable housing in communities to address the housing needs of NWT residents;
2. Acquire and plan for sufficient land for the purpose of providing affordable housing;
3. Provide homeownership and rental programs and services that are effective and appropriate;
4. Enhance the long term sustainability and energy efficiency of housing in the NWT, and;
5. Promote personal responsibility and accountability for housing through community based training and support.

PROPOSED BUDGET ($000)

Total Operating Expenses	$94,897
Compensation & Benefits	$12,546
Grants & Contributions	$56,554
Other O&M	$3,747
Amortization	$12,985
Principal and Interest Charges	$9,065
Infrastructure Investment	$16,420

PROPOSED POSITIONS

Headquarters (HQ)	59 positions
Regional/Other Communities	58 positions

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Executive Office
- Finance and Infrastructure Services
- Programs and District Operations
- Local Housing Organizations

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The department will take the following actions in support of the government's strategic initiatives:

Reducing the Cost of Living

- Improve Quality and Cost of Shelter
    - Housing Strategies Aimed at Quality
    - Shelter Policy Review

- Support Individual and Families
    - Update the Cost of Living Rent Reduction

Refocusing Government

- Manage the Cost of Government
    - Energy Efficiency for Public Housing

2. EMERGING ISSUES

Fiscal Environment and Response

The end of federal economic stimulus funding, through Canada's Economic Action Plan (CEAP), and the continuing decline of federal funding for the operation and maintenance of public housing, continue to place pressure on the NWTHC from a fiscal perspective. A significant decline in federal funding for new construction has resulted in a capital plan for 2011-12 that is substantially reduced from previous years. The NWTHC's total program delivery for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 will have exceeded $117 million over the two years, due to the combined territorial and federal investment. The NWT's total federal allocation to investment in social housing infrastructure for this period amounts to $58.98 million. $55.3 million of this was a one-time infrastructure stimulus investment through CEAP.

Declining Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) funding for operating and maintaining public housing, coupled with mounting public housing arrears, continues to threaten the capacity of Local Housing Organizations (LHOs) to provide public housing in an effective and efficient manner. In 2011-12, federal funding for the operation and maintenance of the public housing units will be $750,000 less than the previous year. This represents a total decline of over $3.5 million from 2003-04 levels.

The NWTHC is addressing the financial challenges associated with housing delivery in three ways:

a) *Arrears.* The NWTHC continues to focus on collection of housing arrears among mortgage clients, current public housing tenants, and former public housing tenants. The approach includes incentive programs to encourage former tenants to resolve arrears, and a more consistent application of policy at Local Housing Organizations to reduce arrears for current tenants through repayment plans and, where necessary, legal action. Within the mortgage portfolio, the NWTHC continues to offer several refinancing options to homeownership clients through its Mortgage Payment Plan (MPP). This collection initiative also includes counselling to clients on the responsibilities of homeownership. The main goal is to collect the monthly payments due, address the arrears, and keep the client in their home.

b) *Intergovernmental.* Through its work at the Tri-Territorial and Provincial/Territorial levels, the NWTHC continues to make the case for long-term investments in housing in the Northwest Territories (NWT) that are based on need rather than a per capita basis, that are predictable and sustainable over the long-term, and that include funding for construction and retrofitting and repair of units, as well as operation and maintenance. The federal government is an essential funding partner in improving housing conditions in the NWT. As long-term predictable federal funding is critical to the ability of the GNWT to continue to provide housing programs and services to its residents over the long-term, the NWTHC will continue to pressure the federal government for continued investment.

c) *Quality of Housing.* One way in which the NWTHC has been responding to the challenges created by fiscal uncertainty is to improve the energy efficiency of public and private housing across the NWT. Energy efficiency is important to the sustainability and

longevity of housing units. The NWTHC has been constructing more energy efficient homes and retrofitting older housing units. The NWTHC continues to improve its housing designs, with an EnerGuide80 rating now standard on all NWTHC designed units. Within the coming year, construction will conclude on a Northern Sustainable Duplex in Inuvik that is anticipated to reach an energy rating of EnerGuide88 or more, surpassing the EnerGuide80 standard. This duplex will serve as a prototype for future collaborative design projects throughout the territory, in an effort to eventually create a standard, energy efficient housing design that is developed by Northerners, for Northerners.

[An EnerGuide rating shows a standard measure of your home's energy performance. It shows you (and future buyers) exactly how energy efficient your home is. The rating is calculated based on standard operation assumptions so that you can compare the energy performance of one house against another. The home's energy efficiency level is rated on a scale of 0 to 100. A rating of 0 represents a home with major air leakage, no insulation and extremely high energy consumption. A rating of 100 represents a house that is airtight, well insulated, sufficiently ventilated and requires no purchased energy on an annual basis.]

Cost of Living and Housing Need

Recently released data from the 2009 *NWT Community Survey – Housing Component* shows that core housing need is increasing across the NWT. While the suitability and adequacy of housing are issues that continue to impact need levels, the cost of living in communities and more specifically the cost to operate housing in many communities is equally significant. Analysis of data from this recent survey indicates that incomes across the territory have not risen at the same pace as the cost to operate, maintain and complete repairs to homes. It is increasingly important for the NWTHC to continue to promote to residents of the NWT the significance of improving the energy efficiency of their homes in order to make energy costs more affordable.

Public Housing Rent Assessments

During 2010-11, responsibility for assessing public housing rents was returned to the NWTHC from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE). The primary focus of the GNWT in transferring this responsibility in 2006 was to support the implementation of the Income Security Policy Framework. The return of the public housing assessment element of the *Public Housing Program* to the NWTHC was to achieve improved delivery of services to public housing tenants, improve the financial sustainability of the Local Housing Organizations that deliver the Public Housing Program, and build on those advances that have been made since the transfer to ECE.

Despite the successes achieved prior to the transfer, there were continuing challenges in delivering public housing in line with client needs and expectations. The *Public Housing Program* plays a critical role in meeting the housing needs in our communities. With the ever increasing need for housing in the Northwest Territories, comes an increasing reliance on the program, and an increasing demand to ensure that tenants in communities receive the highest level of service possible through programs designed to suit the needs of Northerners.

Lack of Skilled Trades People - Apprenticeships

The lack of skilled trades people continues to be a concern for the NWTHC. The limited construction capacity in some communities has created challenges in carrying out some of its capital delivery in those communities. The lack of competition between contractors has also led to increased cost to construct in some communities. The ability of the NWTHC's District Offices and LHOs to hire trained professionals in maintenance and technical positions is also somewhat limited in the current

job market. However, there is an opportunity to support the training of residents for careers in trades through the continued hiring of apprentices and partnering with Aurora College to provide hands on trades training at the community level.

Land Issues

The planning for and acquisition of sufficient suitable land is an essential component of program delivery for the NWTHC. There are specific emerging issues associated with land requirements for housing construction:

a) *Availability of suitable land and land tenure:* With the large scale of NWTHC's capital delivery, finding sufficient suitable land with land tenure for building has been a challenge.

   The NWTHC and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) will collaborate in the area of lands this year in order to develop strategies for building lot acquisition, land development (including the identification of the role of NWT stakeholders and communities in land administration and land development), and land tenure. Land tenure issues with respect to Indian Affairs Branch (IAB) land are impeding the NWTHC's ability to delivery programs to residents of IAB land. As stressed in the Auditor General of Canada's February 2008 report on the NWTHC's Public Housing and Homeownership Programs, housing delivery cannot take place without adequate security first being in place to safeguard the public investment in housing. Currently, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada will not grant leases on IAB lands unless the relevant First Nations formally surrender the IAB status on the land. The NWTHC is working with stakeholders and First Nations groups to educate and reinforce the requirement for land tenure when securing public investment in housing.

b) *Soil Erosion.* Soil erosion continues to be a significant factor in the preparation of land for construction. Climate change and the resulting melting of permafrost may be one of the causal factors of erosion. While additional attention has been given to the issue of erosion in the preparation of land for construction, there is limited understanding of the remediation methods to address eroding land under existing homes.

3. 2011-12 Planning Information

The detailed description of planned activities for the department/agency includes the following sections:

a) **Fiscal Position and Budget** provides information on the department's/agency's operation expenses and revenues.

b) **Key Activities** describes the department's/agency's major programs and services, including strategic activities, as well as results to date and measures.

c) **Infrastructure Investments** gives an overview of the department's/agency's infrastructure investments to date and activities planned for 2011-12.

d) **Legislative Initiatives** provides a summary of the department's/agency's legislative initiatives during the 16th Legislative Assembly as well as initiatives planned for 2011-12.

e) **Human Resources** include overall statistics and position reconciliation, information on capacity building activities as well as departmental training and development.

f) **Information Systems and Management** describes department/agency-specific information and management systems as well as major initiatives planned for 2011-12.

a) Fiscal Position and Budget

DEPARTMENTAL SUMMARY

	Proposed Main Estimates 2011-12	Revised Estimates 2010-11	Main Estimates 2010-11	Main Estimates 2009-10
		($000's)		
OPERATIONS EXPENSE				
Executive	1,276	1,189	1,189	1,114
Programs and District Operations	32,182	38,508	38,508	25,497
Finance and Infrastructure Services	20,683	21,469	21,469	23,683
Local Housing Organization	40,756	39,756	39,756	39,544
TOTAL OPERATIONS EXPENSE	**94,897**	**100,922**	**100,922**	**89,838**
CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE	**16,420**	**54,563**	**37,069**	**17,655**
TOTAL OPERATIONS & CAPITAL	**111,317**	**155,485**	**137,991**	**107,493**
REVENUES	**111,317**	**155,485**	**137,991**	**107,493**

OPERATION EXPENSE SUMMARY

	Main Estimates 2010-11	Revised Estimates 2010-11	Proposed Adjustments: Forced Growth	Proposed Adjustments: Strategic Initiatives	Proposed Adjustments: Sunsets and Other Adjustments	Proposed Adjustments: Internal Reallocations	Proposed Budget 2011-12
			(000's)				
Executive							
Executive	579	579	21	-	-	-	600
Strategic Planning, Policy and Communications	610	610	16	50	-	-	676
Total Executive	**1,189**	**1,189**	**37**	**50**	**-**	**-**	**1,276**
Programs & District Operations							
Vice-President's Office	265	265	8	-	-	-	273
Program Development and Implementation	821	821	25	-	-	-	846
North Slave District	7,950	7,950	49	50	-	(782)	7,267
South Slave District	9,933	9,933	54	50	-	(3,173)	6,864
Nahendeh District	5,058	5,058	23	50	-	(986)	4,145
Beaufort Delta District	8,943	8,943	41	50	-	(1,184)	7,850
Sahtu District	5,538	5,538	32	50	-	(683)	4,937
Total Programs & District Operations	**38,508**	**38,508**	**232**	**250**	**-**	**(6,808)**	**32,182**
Finance & Infrastructure Services							
Vice-President's Office	283	283	12	-	-	-	295
Finance & Administration	7,880	7,880	82	-	-	(130)	7,832
Infrastructure Services	3,130	3,130	60	-	-	301	3,491
Debt Repayment	10,176	10,176	-	-	-	(1,111)	9,065
Total Finance & Infrastructure Services	**21,469**	**21,469**	**154**	**-**	**-**	**(940)**	**20,683**
Local Housing Organizations							
North Slave	8,780	8,780	359	-	-	49	9,188
South Slave	7,223	7,223	62	-	-	53	7,338
Nahendeh	1,924	1,924	78	-	-	13	2,015
Beaufort Delta	16,810	16,810	493	-	-	83	17,386
Sahtu	5,019	5,019	(222)	-	-	32	4,829
Total Local Housing Organizations	**39,756**	**39,756**	**770**	**-**	**-**	**230**	**40,756**
Total Expense	**100,922**	**100,922**	**1,193**	**300**	**-**	**(7,518)**	**94,897**
Total Capital Infrastructure	**37,069**	**54,563**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**(20,649)**	**16,420**
TOTAL CORPORATION	**137,991**	**155,485**	**1,193**	**300**	**-**	**(28,167)**	**111,317**

REVENUE SUMMARY

	Proposed Main Estimates 2011-12	Main Estimates 2010-11	Revised Estimates 2009-10	Main Estimates 2009-10
		(000's)		
CANADA MORTGAGE & HOUSING CORPORATION (CMHC)				
Infrastructure Stimulus Funding	-	29,020	29,470	-
CMHC Recoveries Capital	3,520	2,222	2,310	2,310
CMHC Recoveries Unilateral Programs	3,918	3,918	3,918	3,918
CMHC Recoveries Debt Repayment	7,624	8,671	9,619	9,619
TOTAL	**15,062**	**43,831**	**45,317**	**15,847**
OTHER RECOVERIES				
Sale of Housing Packages & Other Recoveries	2,200	2,361	2,361	2,361
EC&E Subsidy	33,134	32,904	32,700	32,540
Public Housing Tenant Revenue	5,225	5,385	5,385	5,385
Other Revenue	1,115	1,372	1,372	1,372
Lease Revenue	2,821	2,031	2,031	2,031
Non-cash Item Amortization	12,985	12,985	11,718	10,137
Deferred Capital	-	-	22,589	-
TOTAL	**57,480**	**57,038**	**78,156**	**53,826**
GNWT CONTRIBUTION	**38,775**	**37,122**	**38,317**	**37,820**
TOTAL REVENUES	**111,317**	**137,991**	**161,790**	**107,493**

b) Key Activities

KEY ACTIVITY 1: EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Description

The Executive Office of the NWTHC is responsible for providing leadership, managing and directing the implementation of the NWTHC strategic direction in order to meet the mandate and goals of the NWTHC, in conjunction with the goals of the 16th Legislative Assembly and the Minister Responsible for the NWTHC. The Executive Office provides support to and works closely with the Minister's Office to address current and emerging housing matters and to ensure NWTHC activities reflect Ministerial priorities. The Executive Office works collaboratively with GNWT departments/agencies on government wide strategies and numerous joint initiatives to further advance policies and programs to meet the needs of NWT residents. It also collaborates with community and government partners in addressing housing need across the NWT.

The Executive Office works closely with Headquarters and District Office staff to coordinate the overall direction for the NWTHC staff based on the principles of client services, communication and collaboration to better meet the needs of NWT residents.

The Executive also contains the Strategic Planning, Policy and Communications section of the NWTHC. This section provides long-term strategic direction and planning for the NWTHC and supports the NWTHC's interests at the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) level and on interdepartmental working groups and other committees. The section also provides support to strategic and business planning, policy development, qualitative and quantitative research, program evaluation, and internal and external corporate communications.

Major Program and Services 2011-12

Overall

Intergovernmental – PT Housing Forum Chair and "New Approach"
At the tri-territorial level, in 2011-12 the NWT in partnership with the Yukon and Nunavut will finalize its "New Approach to Northern Housing". The "New Approach" would form the basis of a formal funding request to Canada which would include capital investments, funds to operate newly constructed units, as well as renewed funding for the O&M of existing units. The premise of a new approach will be formally endorsed by the Territorial Housing Ministers, after which the document will be forwarded to Canada with a request to begin discussions on a new approach.

During 2011-12, as the NWTHC continues its active participation in intergovernmental housing activity both at the FPT and Tri-Territorial levels, it is likely that the NWT will assume the Provincial-Territorial Co-Chair of the FPT Housing Forum during 2011-12, if not prior to that year. Under the NWT's leadership, provinces and territories will make a renewed and strengthened push for federal engagement on long-term funding and housing policies issues. Most significant among these funding and policy issues is the decline of CMHC funding for the operation and maintenance of social housing.

NWTHC Strategic Plan
NWTHC's current planning framework, *Framework for Action 2008-11*, expires in 2011-12. During 2011-12, the NWTHC will create and implement a new corporate strategic plan to guide its activities. The creation of this plan will include input from both internal and external stakeholders, Housing Corporation staff at the headquarters and district level, as well as LHOs.

Communications
Corporate Communications will continue to be a major focus under this key activity in 2011-12. Communications activities planned for 2011-12 include the launch of a new NWTHC website. The new website will substantially increase the level of information being made available to residents on NWTHC program and service offerings as well as general information on home maintenance. The NWTHC will also produce the *Under One Roof* newspaper supplement twice during 2011-12.

Policy Development and Enhancements
The NWTHC will further develop and review its policies in 2011-12 to ensure that the activities of the organization are being guided by a rigorous policy framework that ensures consistent application and compliance by staff and equitable treatment for all residents. Key policy initiatives for 2011-12 will include implementation of program changes recommended through the program evaluation, further refinements to the *Public Housing Program*, and policy improvements in the areas of collections, arrears, and eviction prevention.

Strategic Initiatives

Shelter Policy
Housing pressures in communities continue to be a significant contributor to the cost of living. The lack of adequate, suitable and affordable housing in all communities of the NWT contributes to other social and economic issues including health and education outcomes, recruitment and retention of essential service providers, energy efficiency, and community sustainability, among others.

In an effort to refocus the GNWT's approach to the provision of housing programs, services and supports to residents at varying stages of the housing continuum, the NWTHC in cooperation with the Department of the Executive will undertake a shelter policy review in 2011-12.

The NWTHC will be completing a review of current program offerings and services as well as to assess Government's overall approach to housing within a broader social policy context. Specific issues to be examined will include:

- Differences in how housing is or should be provided in large communities vs. smaller communities;
- Achieving a fair and equitable regional balance in the delivery of housing;
- Identifying gaps in the housing continuum; specifically between current NWTHC program offerings [For example, current program offerings of the NWTHC are built around core need income thresholds (CNITs) which a household must earn less than in order to qualify. While this works for the most part, situations do arise where clients who meet all other eligibility criteria but are marginally above the CNIT for their community are declined.];
- The impact of public housing and homeownership arrears on service delivery and possible means to address the issue;
- The future outlook for housing in the territory in light of declining federal funding and the downward trend in housing adequacy

Four Year Business Plan Update

Results to Date

Housing Needs Survey Analysis
Results of the 2009 *NWT Community Survey – Housing Component* have been provided to the NWTHC for analysis. 19% of dwellings are now considered to be in core need. This is an increase from 16% in 2004 but remains below the 20% level found in 2000 survey. Changes to the NWTHC's Core Need Income Thresholds prior to the survey had a major impact. A household is in core need when it has a housing problem and an income below the Core Need Income Threshold of the NWTHC.

The timing of the change reflected a working agreement that was reached between CMHC and the NWTHC in May 2007 to revise the Rental CNITs every two years. It was agreed that a two year cycle would be more responsive to clients by reflecting current shelter costs and market conditions. Furthermore, this would coincide with the NWTHC's cycle to revise the Homeownership CNITs every second year. However, the 2009 survey still provides valuable information that will serve as a key driver of the NWTHC's activities over the coming year. Capital planning methodologies for housing delivery have been adjusted to reflect new need data. The NWTHC continues to assess the unique needs of small communities and consider appropriate policy and programming responses to them. Need data will also form a significant part of any future federal lobbying efforts, including the proposed "New Approach to Northern Housing".

The NWTHC forwarded the results of the survey to CMHC who reviewed the methodology of the survey and supported the methods of data collection taken. Further analysis of the data, as well as plan for future data collection in the area of housing, will be important for future planning. This is intended to provide the NWTHC with better baseline data on housing conditions and demographics, improved scope of housing indicators, as well as a more defined planning process for future housing need data collection.

Inference can be made from the results of the 2009 survey that, if not for the significant investment in housing infrastructure across the NWT over the past four to five years, the overall core need percentage of the NWT would be higher, given the increased cost of living (particularly the cost of operating and maintaining a home) in the NWT.

Communications
As part of the NWTHC's continued committment to better communicate with its clients and the general public, to increase understanding of the NWTHC programs and services, and to enhance the transparency of its operations and activities, the NWTHC created the *Under One Roof* newspaper insert this past year. It provides residents of the NWT with information on NWTHC programs and services, upcoming events and initiatives, as well as information on seasonal maintenance and other homeowner tips. This insert has been very successful. During the 2009-2010 *Housing Choices* program application intake, 1 out of every 6 applicants for homeownership programs indicated that they were made aware of the opportunity to apply through *Under One Roof*. General feedback on the insert has been overwhelmingly positive.

Federal Engagement – Northern "New Approach"
The NWTHC has worked closely with its counterparts in the Yukon and Nunavut on a "New Approach to Northern Housing" during the past year. The Territorial Housing Ministers will be discussing this at a Tri-Territorial meeting scheduled to take place at Iqaluit, NT in September 2010.

Program Evaluation / Closing the Gaps in Programs

The NWTHC's programs and services are designed to meet the needs of households at all stages of the housing continuum. Some gaps between the programs are evident in some rural communities with higher costs of living and lower employment. This problem is even larger in communities without public housing. As the NWTHC continues to look for ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of its programs and services, it has adjusted several areas of the *Housing Choices* programs to meet emerging needs and to respond to issues raised by MLAs and the general public. There was urgency to incorporate changes impacting client subsidies to address affordability issues and to close or narrow gaps between programs. One valuable tool that will provide important feedback as to the effectiveness of the NWTHC's *Housing Choices*, and the recent changes to it, will be an independent evaluation of the *Housing Choices* to take place in 2011-2012. It is anticipated that the report from this evaluation will be beneficial to the ongoing improvement of programs to meet the changing housing needs of NWT residents.

Former Public Housing Tenant Arrears Collection Incentive – 10/10/10

Collection of public housing rental arrears remains a challenge; however, the NWTHC continues to explore manageable options for clients that provide them with incentive to address their arrears. One such option under consideration by the NWTHC is to provide former public housing tenants with a 10% reduction on their total arrears if they sign up for a repayment plan. If they fulfill that payment plan (make their payments consistently) for one year they would be eligible for an additional 10% reduction. If they are consistent with their payments again for the second year they would be eligible for a further 10% reduction, bringing the reduction to a maximum 30% reduction of their total arrears.

Changes to Four Year Business Plan

The NWTHC has removed Key Activity 3, "Debt Repayment", from its Business Plan. Information on debt repayment is now included as a measure reported under Key Activity 2, "Finance and Infrastructure Services" for the purposes of business planning as well as the Main Estimates process, which is done in consultation with the Department of Finance. This change is necessary to better reflect the responsibilities of Finance and Infrastructures Services in managing debt repayment activities.

As a result of this change, "Programs and District Operations" is now listed as Key Activity 3, while "Local Housing Organizations" is now Key Activity 4.

KEY ACTIVITY 2: FINANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

Description

Finance and Infrastructure Services (FIS) coordinates financial services, capital planning, land requirements, and infrastructure to support the delivery of the NWTHC's Infrastructure Acquisition Plan. FIS is structured with two distinct divisions, Finance and Administration and Infrastructure Services.

The Finance & Administration Division is responsible for the overall financial affairs of the NWTHC and its Boards and Agencies. This includes financial planning, the provision of accounting services, reporting and monitoring, treasury services, mortgage and debt administration, and providing financial advice to senior management and stakeholders. This Division is also responsible for the NWTHC's Information Systems and Information Management and is responsible for materials management and the safeguarding of corporate assets.

The Finance & Administration Division is also responsible for managing the NWTHC's own source revenues and funding from CMHC under the Social Housing Agreement and under the current Canada Economic Action Plan. The Division is responsible for the Corporate Loan Guarantee Program which supports the construction of new residential housing in the NWT by independent developers The Division also provides ongoing subsidy assistance and operational support to various non-profit housing NGOs outside of the public housing program.

The Infrastructure Services Division is responsible for the overall development, design and procurement, planning and delivery of capital infrastructure projects in support of the NWTHC's rental and homeownership programs. This Division is also responsible for the planning, procurement, and administration of suitable land for the delivery of housing programs and services and the security of NWTHC assets and mortgage interests. Infrastructure Services is also responsible for the maintenance management of the NWTHC's public housing portfolio in order to ensure its long term sustainability. The Division provides technical assistance in the development of new housing programs and supports the District Offices in their delivery of the Contributing Assistance or Repairs and Enhancements (CARE) program where it works with private homeowners to determine their repair needs and develop scopes of work. Finally, Infrastructure Services is the NWTHC's lead on issues related to energy efficiency and new housing technologies.

Major Program and Service Initiatives 2011-12

Overall

Mortgage and Rent Collections Strategies

The NWTHC continued efforts to increase contact with homeownership clients and public housing tenants with respect to their outstanding arrears, educating and counselling them with regard to homeownership and tenancy responsibilities and the incentives and options for them to address their arrears has been critical to improving the rate of arrears collections. Arrears impact the client most directly, as having arrears restricts access to homeownership programs and can result in termination of leases and ultimately eviction. Arrears also have a serious impact on LHOs operations as they can lead to deficits which in turn result in reduced capacity to operate and maintain units. By working together with and better communicating with homeownership clients and public housing tenants regarding the role that each plays in the success of the NWTHC's programs, it is expected that

collection rates will continue to improve. By 2011-12 the NWTHC will have fully implemented its mortgage and rent collection strategies for mortgage clients, current public housing tenants, as well as former tenants:

a. Mortgage Clients

The NWTHC will continue to address mortgage arrears through its mortgage payment plan which provides several refinancing options to mortgage clients in arrears. In an effort to bolster its collection efforts, the NWTHC will make final attempts to reach refinancing options with clients, with the files of those clients who do not cooperate being referred to legal counsel for a final demand letter and possible legal action. The NWTHC will pursue the most serious cases of arrears as an initial priority with all cases addressed over time.

b. Current Public Housing Tenants

By 2011-12, the NWTHC will implement a new repayment plan policy for use by LHOs. Under the terms of this new policy, repayment plans for tenants in arrears will be mandatory, and any client in arrears who does not voluntarily enter a repayment plan will be brought before the Territorial Rental Officer to impose a repayment schedule. The consistent application of repayment policy across LHOs should, over time, greatly improve tenant and LHO compliance with the terms of public housing leases. Greater cooperation between tenant and landlord will serve as an effective means to prevent eviction in all but the most serious of cases.

c. Former Public Housing Tenants

The NWTHC is developing policy and exploring new options to address the challenge of collection of rental arrears from former public housing tenants. One option being explored is an incentive based approach to arrears collection. Former tenants who wish to resolve their rental arrears would receive an immediate 10% reduction in their arrears for agreeing to a repayment plan. Former tenants would also receive further 10% reductions for each year of compliance with the repayment plan, up to a maximum of 30%. The NWTHC will also examine the files and current financial situation of former tenants, and will consider taking additional steps, which may include write-off and forgiveness of arrears, in cases of severe hardship.

LHO Financial Management

NWTHC continues to focus on enhanced procedures that will revitalize its partnerships with LHOs and promote their financial sustainability. LHOs rely on the rent they collect from tenants and on the Public Housing Rental Subsidy to manage and maintain the public housing inventory. The NWTHC and LHOs continue to educate tenants and communities on the fundamental role that rent collections have in the continued financial viability of LHOs. There is still some resistance by tenants to provide their income information on a regular basis; however, the LHOs continue to work with tenants to encourage and support them to provide the required information. It is anticipated that LHO collection rates will return to at least the 90% level by 2011-12 as a result of improved communications with tenants, the return of responsibility for public housing rent assessments from the Department of ECE to the NWTHC and the continued enforcement of rent collection and repayment policies.

Housing for Staff

The NWTHC continues to be actively engaged in developing partnerships with community developers in order to increase the supply of housing for critical front line staff in order to improve staff recruitment and retention in rural and remote communities. These are partnerships to construct

new housing or purchase and renovate existing surplus NWTHC stock. Some developers are also considering the acquisition of new modular rental housing to fill this need for more affordable housing. The NWTHC will continue to work with community developers through 2011-12 to provide housing that can be utilized in the recruitment and retention of frontline staff. Responsibility for the policy aspects of the recruitment and retention of frontline staff resides with the Departments of Human Resources, the Executive, as well as departments who wish to recruit front line employees.

Information Management System Improvements
The *Housing Choices* and *Public Housing Programs* play a critical role in meeting the housing needs in our communities. It is the responsibility of the NWTHC's Headquarters to ensure that allocation and assessments conducted at the LHOs and District offices are in line with housing policies and procedures. The NWTHC is committed to addressing the accuracy and timeliness of assessments while ensuring the tenants in communities receive the highest level of service possible.

The NWTHC will address the gaps in the existing system application model to ensure that the NWTHC can improve the management of the *Public Housing Program*. This can be achieved through the establishment of an improved Territorial Housing Information Management System that will directly reflect our partnerships with tenants and clients and better inform our decisions as they relate to housing programs and that will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of program operations due to an improved ability to plan, track, and analyze information. The new information management system will be fully implemented in 2011-12.

Strategic Initiatives

Housing Strategies Aimed at Quality
This action employs additional funding each year up to 2011-12 to enable existing homeowners to make necessary repairs to their homes through the Contributing Assistance for Repairs and Enhancements program (CARE). The NWT is committed to providing assistance to all qualified clients in order to ensure a safe and healthy residence and to increase the useful economic life of their home.

The CARE program is essential in order for the NWTHC to provide for on-going assistance to residents of NWT that are in core need (including persons with disabilities). In order to address the high level of need in the NWT, the NWTHC adjusted the qualifying income thresholds for its *Housing Choices* homeownership programs in 2009-10. This will result in more NWT residents, in need of assistance with repairs, qualifying for assistance under the CARE Program.

Energy Efficiency for Public Housing
In 2009-10 continuing through 2010-11, NWTHC planned to implement energy upgrades on 80 public housing units that it selected using data obtained through Home Energy Evaluations, building envelope analysis, mechanical/electrical system analysis, and other on-site or background research. After final scopes of work and confirmed project pricing were obtained, the NWTHC was able to perform energy efficiency upgrades on 86 units in 2009-10 and plans to retrofit a further 63 units in 2010-11 for a total of 149 units.

The NWTHC has also implemented a high efficiency standard for public housing, in accordance with Natural Resources Canada's (NRCan's) EnerGuide for Houses (EGH) minimum 80 rating for high efficiency homes.

The NWTHC proposes that an investment of $1,000,000 million in 2011-12 in the modernization and improvement (M&I) of the NWTHC's public housing units as part of its ecoEnergy Retrofit Fund for

public housing would fund completion of energy upgrades on approximately 53 of the public housing units in greatest need of retrofitting.. It would also promote the Government's objective to reduce energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions in the NWT. Retrofitted assets will be monitored to assess the effectiveness of the upgrades. Proposed units for retrofit were identified through Home Energy evaluations by the Arctic Energy Alliance in coordination with the NWTHC. These evaluations have helped to determine the greatest emission and cost reduction for future energy retrofit upgrades and have assisted in developing an approach to evaluate all existing public housing units.

Expected Results include:

- Reduction of annual energy use by 25%-30% in each building for savings of up to $2,400 per building.
- Completing 53 retrofits in 2011-12 is expected to save approximately $130,000 each year.
- Greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced by up to 3 tonnes per building giving an expected reduction of about 160 tonnes per year.

Update the Cost of Living Rent Reduction

In 2009, under the Reducing the Cost of Living Strategic Initiative Committee, the Department of ECE updated the Cost of Living Rent Reduction (COLRR)] to reflect the cost of living in the NWT. COLRR is a deduction to the rent charged to public housing tenants to compensate for the difference in cost between operating a household in Yellowknife and in other Northern communities. The COLRR subsidy was increased by $160,000 and implemented effective April 1, 2010. This is an ongoing subsidy.

Four Year Business Plan Update

Results to Date

Mortgage Collections

Collection of client mortgage arrears remains a challenge; however, the NWTHC is balancing its efforts to increase collections with providing clients options to continue owning their own home. The NWTHC continues to work with mortgage clients on an individual basis to address mortgage arrears. The NWTHC's efforts to significantly its collection of outstanding mortgage arrears has resulted in a number of clients choosing to resolve their arrears through refinancing, through repayment plans, or by quit claiming the home and entering the NWTHC's *Public Housing Program*. Term positions have been added to the organization to focus on mortgage collections, and by the beginning of 2011-12 the NWTHC will begin taking further action against those clients who have not selected one of the options available to them through the MPP.

Housing for Staff

The GNWT is advancing a Housing for Staff activity designed to address services in rural and remote communities through the increased recruitment and retention of service delivery staff. The NWTHC has been tasked with engaging community developers in partnership opportunities through incentives to develop new rental housing. A suite of financial and planning supports has been made available to developers including:

- A forgivable loan for new units
- A corporate loan guarantee
- The provision of design, procurement and project management support services

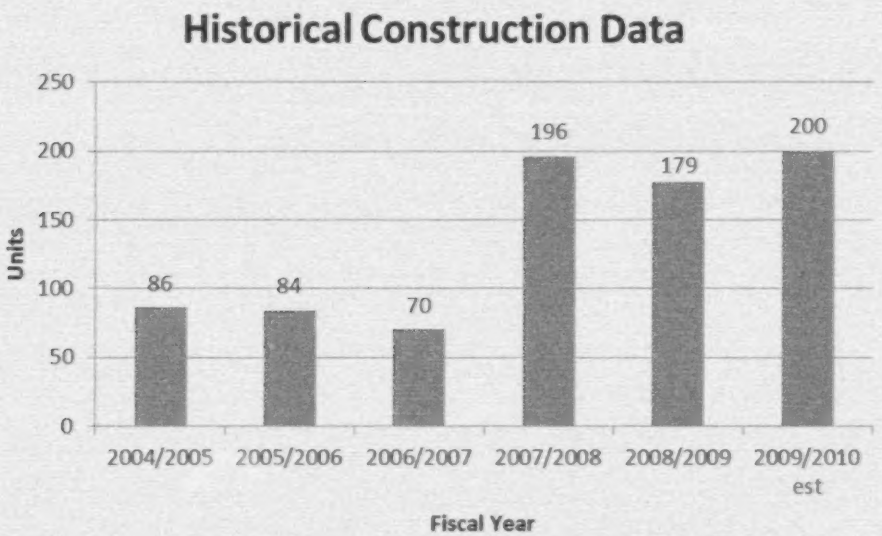
To date, agreements have been signed with developers for the development of 32 units in 13 communities. Pending signing are 5 more agreements for a total of 37 units in 14 communities. There have been 4 units constructed under the program to date. NWTHC continues to have discussions with development corporations in 9 other communities looking at potential opportunities for partnerships.

Measures Reporting

Measure 1

Affordable Housing Initiative and Capital Delivery under Canada's Economic Action Plan

The construction of new housing units by the NWTHC substantially increased over the past four years largely as a result of large-scale capital delivery plans due to considerable investments in housing infrastructure by the GNWT and federal government. 460 new housing units have been built under the NWTHC's *Affordable Housing Initiative* (over the period 2006-2007 through to and including 2009-2010) with an additional 41 scheduled for completion in 2010-2011. An additional 200 units were constructed in the first year (2009-2010) of delivery under Canada's Economic Action Plan.



Measure 2

Mortgage Collections/Mortgage Payment Plan

The NWTHC has been continuing to contact mortgage clients in arrears and provide individual counselling as to their options to address their arrears under the Mortgage Payment Plan, thus allowing the clients to continue to own their own home. A number of clients have opted into the program and selected an option to resolve their arrears either through refinancing, repayment plans or by reverting to an NWTHC rental program.

Measure 3

Corporate Investment Strategy

Information on the investment activity of the NWTHC is required in the Corporate Business Plan to comply with Subsection 91(2) of the *Financial Administration Act.*

The NWTHC is restricted to those types of investments specified in Subsection 81(1) of the *Financial Administration Act*, which states:

"A public agency may invest money belonging to the public agency:

a. In certificates of deposit, deposit receipts, notes or other evidences of indebtedness given by a bank in consideration of deposits made with the bank; and

b. In securities where repayment principal and interest is unconditionally guaranteed by a bank;

Investments are determined through cash management procedures ensuring surplus funds are invested in those forms of security which pay the highest level of interest while maintaining an adequate level of cash on hand to meet daily requirements.

Surplus funds for 2009-10 were invested in short and long-term investments. Investments of less than 1 year had an average term to maturity of 135 days and a market yield of 0.16% to 0.30%. Longer term investments had terms ranging from 1 to 11 years and a weighted average yield of 3.03%.

Measure 4

Debt Repayment

The NWTHC has $56.3 million in long-term debt with the CMHC for the provision of public rental housing. The annual principal and interest payment on this debt is $10 million. In accordance with the Social Housing Agreement, CMHC also contributes $8.7 million annually in servicing this debt.

The total reduction of debt from the beginning of this business planning cycle on March 31, 2008 through March 31, 2011 is $15.3 million, from $71.6 million to $56.3 million.

KEY ACTIVITY 3: PROGRAMS AND DISTRICT OPERATIONS

Description

This Division provides corporate support to the NWTHC's five District Offices in the delivery of programs and services to the residents of the NWT. This includes the development, implementation, training, monitoring, and delivery of programs and initiatives that optimize the NWTHC's responsiveness to housing needs in the NWT, and to ensure a continuity of approach to program delivery and implementation.

The Programs and District Operations Division works closely with district and community housing providers to ensure compliance with existing policies and procedures, as well as developing and updating operational policies while ensuring that District Offices and LHOs have the support and capacity required to effectively deliver the NWTHC's programs and services.

Major Program and Service Initiatives 2011-12

Overall

Rent Scale Implementation
During the second half of fiscal year 2010-11, the NWTHC will be completing a review of the rent scale currently being utilized in the *Public Housing Program*. The results of this review will be used to create a revised rent scale with implementation planned for April 1, 2011.

All elements of the rent scale will be reviewed and assessed, including:

- the use of gross income vs. net income to assess rent
- the appropriateness of current rent-geared-to-income levels
- maximum rent levels in communities, including an assessment of the impact of replacing community-based rents with region-based rents
- current rent reductions, including cost of living reductions, the level of subsidy provided to Income Support clients and students, and fully subsidized rent for seniors

Public Housing Program Enhancements
Following the transfer of responsibility for public housing rent assessments, the NWTHC began making enhancements to the *Public Housing Program* designed to improve customer service and strengthen the financial and operating capacity of LHOs. Program enhancements to be introduced, implemented, or considered in 2011-12 include:

- an updated Public Housing Policy Manual
- an improved Territorial Housing Information Management System
- whether a new or revised Public Housing Rent Scale is necessary
- options to fill program gaps
- continuation of the updating of NWTHC policies and procedures
- in cooperation with the Department of the Executive, undertaking a shelter policy review, in an effort to refocus the GNWT's approach to the provision of housing programs, services and supports to residents at varying stages of the housing continuum

Program Evaluation – Implementation

During the second half of 2010-11, an independent evaluation of the *Housing Choices* programs will be completed. During 2011-12, the Programs and District Operations division will be responsible for reviewing the recommendations of the independent evaluation and leading in any changes that may result after assessment of the report. As program intake is normally completed in September each year, these changes will need to be implemented early in 2011-12 in order to be reflected in the 2011-12 program intake.

Vacant Unit Utilization and Disposal

The NWTHC continues to address any vacancies in its homeownership, public and/or market housing portfolios. To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of this process, the NWTHC is in the process of finalizing a long-term *Vacant Unit Strategy* for the utilization and/or disposal of vacant units in each region, which is part of a strategy that the NWTHC has been implementing over the past three to four years. In many cases, housing units may appear to be "vacant" but are undergoing repairs or are beyond economic repair, so further investment is not justified and the health and safety of the unit cannot be assured. In the case of vacant units that are ready for occupancy, the NWTHC looks at approaches to utilize the units. This might include transferring vacant homeownership units to the public housing portfolio, allocating vacant units through the *Housing Choices* program intake, or selling some units as market housing. In the case of older units that are beyond economic repair, demolition may be necessary in order to make room for new construction of homeownership units or replacement public housing units.

Four Year Business Plan Update

Results to Date

Program Evaluation

The NWTHC is conducting an evaluation of its *Housing Choices* program for homeownership clients in Fall 2010. Due to inflation and rising market costs, there was a need to increase the amount of assistance available to applicants under *Housing Choices* in order to purchase a home or repair their home. The NWTHC identified and made adjustments to several areas of *Housing Choices* in order to address this pressing affordability issue. Now that at least one year has passed since the April 1, 2009 effective date of these changes, enough time has passed for the impact of these changes to be understood in the overall assessment of *Housing Choices*. A request for proposals (RFP) will be put out for the evaluation to be conducted independently. It is anticipated that this independent evaluation of the design, implementation, and effectiveness of the *Housing Choices* programs will be a valuable tool to measuring the effectiveness of the programs and provide valuable information to aid in planning that will benefit NWT residents. In addition, a permanent review body, the *Housing Choices* Program Review Committee, has also been established to monitor and evaluate the programs on an ongoing basis.

Response to Auditor General's Performance Audit

Rent Collections - The rental collections rate for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009 was 70%. This was a marked decline from the rate of 87% in 2008-09, and was a key motivating factor in the decision to return responsibility for rent assessments to LHOs. The decrease seems largely attributable to low collections rates in a small number of communities. . In communities where progress is not evident, the NWTHC may need to take stronger measures to support the LHOs in improving their operations.

Implementation of Appeal Mechanism - The NWTHC continues to work towards a formal appeal mechanism to enable an independent review of decisions that are commonly questioned by

residents. A formal appeal mechanism supports the NWTHC's objective to have clear policies that are applied consistently across the NWT. While decisions made by the NWTHC and LHOs are based on established policies, residents question the interpretation of some decisions. The transfer of responsibility for rent assessments to LHOs made the original proposal to merge the ECE Income Support appeals mechanism with a Housing Appeals board less effective. The NWTHC will implement a new appeals mechanism during 2011-12.

Policy Review Committee – The NWTHC has now a Policy Review Committee with a mandate to review the policies and the policy structure of the NWTHC on an ongoing basis. This includes identification of areas where new policies are required, on a short and long-term basis, to meet the strategic and operational needs and priorities of the NWTHC.

Communications – The NWTHC continues to focus on communications as a key element of all its initiatives. Areas for renewed communications focus continue to include such things as improved client counselling, more frequent information sessions in communities; enhancing website; enhancing print media and radio campaigns. In partnership with CMHC, the NWTHC is also developing a communications strategy for collaborative communication of programs, services and education materials available through both organizations. As part of this effort, the NWTHC and CMHC are currently working on education to communities regarding land issues and implications in the delivery of social housing programs and services.

KEY ACTIVITY 4: LOCAL HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS

Description

LHOs are the delivery agents of the NWTHC and responsible for the community delivery of the *Public Housing Program.* The *Public Housing Program* is a rental program designed for individuals and families who do not have the financial resources to access shelter on their own. The NWTHC, in partnership with 23 LHOs, administers approximately 2,400 social housing units in 26 communities across the NWT. These LHOs provide, under agreement with the NWTHC, the assessment of rent, the allocation of units, the collection of rents, and the provision of preventative and demand maintenance services. Now that the responsibility of rent assessment has been returned to the LHOs, it is important that the LHOs rigorously pursue the assessments in a way that is convenient to public housing tenants and in a fair and consistent manner across the system.

Major Program and Service Initiatives 2011-12

Overall

Deficit Management Plans
LHOs are block funded for expenditures that are under their control (administration, maintenance & rent collections) and deficit-funded for non-controllable expenditures (utilities, taxes, leasing & rent assessments). LHOs that overspend on administration and maintenance or are unable to collect 90% of the rent assessments will experience deficits.

The transfer of responsibility for public housing assessments is anticipated to improve the collection rate of LHOs in 2011-12, which should serve to partially remedy existing deficits and mitigate them in the future. During 2011-12, the NWTHC will work with LHOs that have deficits in order to remedy these issues as detailed under their deficit management plans.

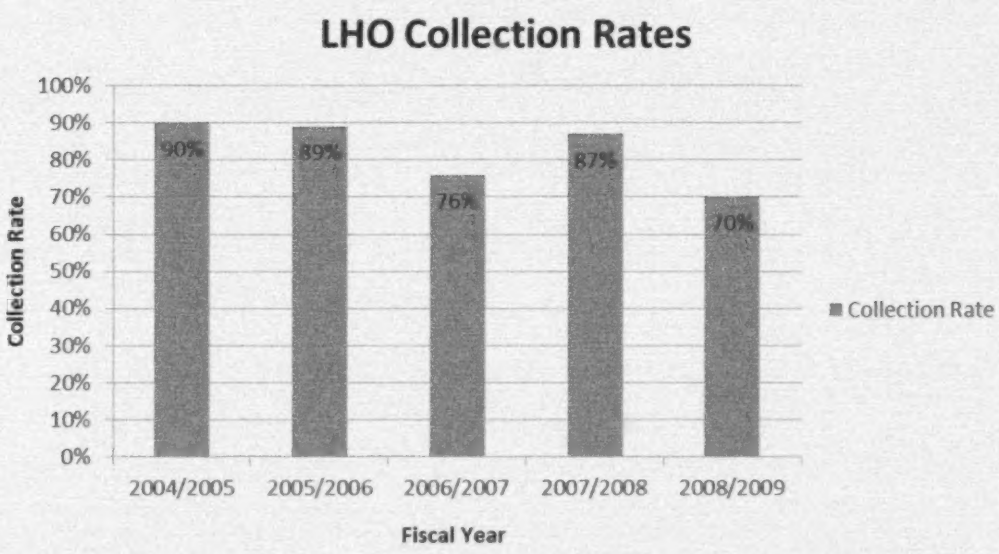
Maintenance Management
LHOs, through support by District Offices will continue to undergo training in appropriate maintenance management practices including computer training on the Maintenance Management Operating System (MMOS), project management, and changes to building codes. During 2011-12, the NWTHC will introduce an updated Maintenance Management Manual. This manual will be introduced to LHO maintenance staff during orientation and training on the Maintenance Management Program. LHOs will once again be expected to provide the NWTHC with updated unit condition rating reports, as required on a yearly basis.

Universal Partnership Agreements
The NWTHC has a long history of partnering with communities and Aboriginal organizations in the delivery of social housing, which results in building capacity and strengths local decision making. During 2011-12, the NWTHC will work with LHOs to renew the framework of its Universal Partnership Agreements Amendments to existing agreements are required in order to reflect such things as: LHO policy compliance with new and existing public housing policies, additional responsibilities of some LHOs with respect to property management of other forms of rental housing, including market rental housing and units leased under the HELP program; and compatibility with business process change and the GNWTs recent new financial management system.

Measures Reporting

Amount and percentage rate of rent collected

The public housing rent collections amount was $5.2 million, 70%, in 2008-09. This is a decrease from the 2007-08 level of 87%. This measure has been impacted by a number of LHOs with low collections rates. The NWTHC continues to work with LHOs experiencing low collections rates in order to reinforce their obligation to pursue a 100% collection rate and the process required for successful collections. For LHOs to remain viable, they need to achieve a collection rate of at least 90%; however, a 100% rate of collections is needed for optimum efficiency. Improvements are underway to enhance service to clients and the financial viability of the LHOs. These include a closer relationship between the LHOs and tenants, a review of LHO operating budgets, revisions to the public housing policy and procedures manual, and information management systems development. The collection rate is expected to increase as a result of these improvements.



c) Infrastructure Investments

Activity to Date

For the three year period from 2008-09 to 2010-11, the Corporation has invested heavily in the replacement of its aging public housing stock and completed major repairs/renovations to other public housing units to ensure the long-term sustainability of its housing portfolio. In addition new units were constructed under the HELP program to help meet the need of the increasing numbers of clients applying to enter the NWTHC's homeownership programs.

For this period approximately $108 million has/will be spent in the construction of 375 new public housing and homeownership units and in the provision of major repairs/renovations to approximately 630 housing units.

The considerable capital investment over this period has been funded by the GNWT and by the federal government under the "Affordable Housing Initiative" and "Canada's Economic Action Plan".

Planned Activities – 2011-12

With the end of the federal funding under the "Canada Economic Action Plan", the funding for infrastructure investments returns to pre-federal stimulus investment. For 2011-12, the NWTHC has planned expenditures of $16.42 million for the construction of 39 new housing units and the major repairs to a further 130 units.

This planning year represents the first in which NWTHC infrastructure investments will be approved through the GNWT Capital Acquisition Planning process in the Fall 2010 session of the Legislative Assembly. This is intended to better coordinate NWTHC capital delivery with other capital delivery being undertaken by GNWT departments.

The results of the 2009 *NWT Community Survey – Housing Component* will continue to be used as the basis of the capital allocation model.

d) Legislative Initiatives

Activity to Date

The NWTHC has made no changes to the *Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act* during the 16th Assembly.

Planned Activities – 2011-12

There are no plans to introduce amendments to existing legislation during 2011-12.

e) Human Resources

Overall Human Resource Statistics

All Employees

	2010	%	2009	%	2008	%	2007	%
Total	103	100	95	100	103	100	91	100
Indigenous Employees	64	62	68	71.5	51	49.5	47	48.0
Aboriginal	36	35	42	44.2	35	34.0	36	36.7
Non-Aboriginal	28	27	26	27.4	16	15.5	11	11.2
Non-Indigenous Employees	39	38	27	28.4	52	50.5	51	52.0

Note: Information as of March 31 each year

Senior Management Employees

	2010	%	2009	%	2008	%	2007	%
Total	10	100	10	100	7	100	9	100
Indigenous Employees	6	60	8	80.0	4	57.1	5	55.6
Aboriginal	3	30	3	30.0	2	28.6	3	33.3
Non-Aboriginal	3	30	5	50.0	2	28.6	2	22.2
Non-Indigenous Employees	4	40	2	20.0	3	42.9	4	44.4
Male	7	70	7	70.0	6	85.7	8	88.9
Female	3	30	3	30.0	1	14.3	1	11.1

Note: Information as of March 31 each year

Non-Traditional Occupations

	2010	%	2009	%	2008	%	2007	%
Total	13	100	13	100	16	100	14	100
Female	3	23.1	2	15.4	1	6.3	1	7.1
Male	10	76.9	11	84.6	15	93.8	13	92.9

Note: Information as of March 31 each year

Employees with Disabilities

	2010	%	2009	%	2008	%	2007	%
Total	2	1.9	1	1.0	2	1.9	3	3.1

Note: Information as of March 31 each year

Position Reconciliation

This information differs from the employee information on the preceding page; Human Resource information reflects actual employees as of March 31 each year. The information presented below reflects position expenditures approved through the budget process for each fiscal year.

Active Positions

Summary:

	2010-11 Main Estimates	**Change**	**2011-12 Business Plan**
Total	117	-	117
Indeterminate full-time	113	-	113
Indeterminate part-time	4	-	4
Seasonal	-	-	-

Adjustments During the Year:

Position	Community	Region	Added/ Deleted	Explanation

Other Human Resource Information

One of the stated priorities of the Legislative Assembly is to "improve human resource management within the GNWT through training, career planning, and encouraging innovation by employees." To address this priority, the Department of Human Resources has launched a long-term human resources strategy for the public service entitled, *20/20: A Brilliant North*. Among other initiatives, this strategy provides a framework for the development of departmental human resource plans, including succession plans and affirmative action plans.

The tables below indicate statistics on departmental human resource activities with respect to summer students, interns and transfer assignments for 2010. The information is current as of August 2010.

Summer Students				
Total Students	Indigenous Employees (Aboriginal + Non Aboriginal	Indigenous Aboriginal	Indigenous Non-Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
14	13	8	5	1

Interns				
Total Interns	Indigenous Employees (Aboriginal + Non Aboriginal	Indigenous Aboriginal	Indigenous Non-Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
2	2	1	1	0

Transfer Assignments				
Total Transfer Assignments	Indigenous Employees (Aboriginal + Non Aboriginal	Indigenous Aboriginal	Indigenous Non-Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
1	1	0	1	0

Activities Associated with Staff Training & Development

During 2011-12, the NWTHC will place specific focus on labour relations training for its senior and middle management team, as there has been significant turnover within this group over the past 3 years. In addition, 9 employees of the organization are enrolled in Management Development training programs. One employee is currently on education leave to complete course work en route to receiving a Chartered Accountant designation.

f) Information Systems & Management

Overview

The Information Services Section of the NWTHC provides complete information technology services and support to its corporate employees in headquarters and district offices. These services are also made available to the NWTHC's community partners to effectively deliver the *Public Housing Program*. Through the use of the latest technologies, information management methodologies and innovative system designs, the NWTHC ensures that its computerized operating systems remain at an optimum level.

Corporate Systems:

The NWTHC has standardized the Microsoft Windows 2003 Active Directory network infrastructure and the Windows XP/Vista/7 operating systems on workstations and laptops. The NWTHC has also standardized the Microsoft Office 2007 suite of applications. The hardware needs of the NWTHC's workstations, laptops and servers are met by tier one vendors, which have proven to be reliable and very responsive when support was required. Licensing requirements are met through leveraging the GNWT agreements with the NWTHC's Enterprise Licensing Agreement with Microsoft Canada.

All NWTHC application systems have been developed with Visual Basic .NET 2005 and run on SQL Server 2005. This standard provides a stable framework from which to provide scalable centralized application systems, which are compatible with other GNWT database systems.

Program Systems:

The NWTHC Information Management System (HCIMS) is the central system used to deliver homeownership programs that are offered under *Housing Choices*. The system is used for several purposes and divided into the following modules:

1. Client Application System
   - The system is used where record and store data received from applicants to the program. Safeguards for approvals are built in to ensure that applicants are approved according to the policies of *Housing Choices*. The system provides valuable data that is used to develop budgets and update programs to improve responsiveness.

2. Land Inventory System
   - The system is used to record and monitor the security the NWTHC's inventory of land.

3. Administration System:
   - This system is used primarily for global reporting. The NWTHC can track and identify trends in community housing demands, changing income levels, and areas where improvements can be made to its programs.

The NWTHC uses the Maintenance Management Operating System (MMOS) as part of its Maintenance Management Program to track the maintenance activities for its assets. The NWTHC's community partners who deliver the *Public Housing Program* use MMOS. Through the use of MMOS, the NWTHC monitors demand and preventative maintenance activities, maintenance

scheduling, stock inventories, budget performance, and other asset maintenance activities. Through the monitoring of MMOS reports, the NWTHC provides support and direction to its community partners to ensure assets are maintained at a high standard.

In 2011-12, the NWTHC will launch a new Microsoft SharePoint environment to help improve organizational effectiveness by providing comprehensive content management and enterprise search, accelerating shared business processes, and facilitating information-sharing and collaboration across districts, divisions and community partners for better corporate insight. Additionally, this collaboration and content management server provides IT staff with the platform and tools they need for server administration, application extensibility, and interoperability.

The Mortgage Administration System (MAS) is an administration tool used to track the balance, payments, interest and subsidy on repayable mortgages to the NWTHC. The system's flexibility in regards to changing subsidies on mortgages is a unique feature required by the NWTHC in a mortgage administration system.

The GNWT transferred the administration of the Public Housing Rental Subsidy back to the NWTHC on June 1st 2010. This decision included full responsibility for all aspects of the *Public Housing Program* as well as the supporting information system applications. The Rentscale computer program is the legacy NWTHC application used to calculate rent assessments for tenants in public housing units and has been refined to facilitate the return of the Public Housing Rent Subsidy to the NWTHC.

Planned Activities – 2011-12

The Rentscale computer program will be replaced by a Territorial Housing Information Management System (THIMS) which will address the gaps in the existing system application model to ensure that the NWTHC can improve the management of the *Public Housing Program*. This social housing tool will directly reflect our partnerships with tenants and better inform our decisions as they relate to housing programs.

There will be a continued focus on the establishment of our SharePoint environment in order to automate workflow and enable greater collaboration, knowledge management and information sharing throughout the NWTHC's offices.

All efforts will continue to be made to ensure that NWTHC IT policies and procedures are aligned with those of the GNWT/TSC providing enterprise wide corporate standards while affording us the required adaptability to accommodate our unique working partnerships. The IT infrastructure will be evaluated to ensure all network systems are in line with GNWT standards to ensure the seamless communication between NWTHC and GNWT systems.

The centralization of our MMOS system will be completed to allow for enhanced and accessible corporate wide reporting and monitoring. This application model will also provide greater data security and integrity.

The Client Application System will be further enhanced though establishment of linkages to the Canada Revenue Agency to allow for direct income verifications allowing for more accurate and timely decision making.

The Microsoft System Center application, a system used to manage our IT Infrastructure, will be deployed with complete integration of our hardware and software systems.

We will establish a centralized construction project management solution that will meet the management and reporting requirements of the infrastructure division.

The NWTHC will work with the GNWT and the Office of the Chief Information Officer towards the implementation, rollout and continued maintenance of electronic records and document management technologies and processes. The NWTHC has completed the rollout of ARCS and revised ORCS in all divisions and districts and is positioned to move forward in this area.

All server infrastructures will be upgraded to Microsoft Server 2008 production suites. Complete major application and Operating system upgrades to Office 2010, SharePoint 2010, Project 2010 and Windows 7. The standard application development platform will be upgraded to Microsoft .net 2008 and all applications and controls will be upgraded and tested to ensure compatibility.

A complete NWTHC business needs assessment and process mapping will be completed as part of our Information Systems analysis project which will support all application upgrades and new application development.

4. Future Strategic Direction

Long-Term Federal Support for Housing in the NWT

Adequate, suitable, and affordable housing is a prerequisite for achieving positive economic and social outcomes for communities. Housing is a key socio-economic determinant of health and a critical component in poverty reduction strategies. In some NWT communities social housing represents the primary housing option available to residents making it a critical component of the social fabric.

Funding for the operation and maintenance of the NWTC's public housing portfolio is decreasing and expiring over time. Over the period of 2000-2038, the cumulative impact of declining funding in the NWT will be approximately $340 million. The impact of declining funding is already being felt by LHOs as their capacity to operate and maintain both new and existing units diminishes with each new fiscal year.

The reduction and eventual elimination of funding threatens NWT finances and its social housing stock in several ways. Financially, over time without renewed federal investment the GNWT will be required to fully assume costs for social housing programs previously shared with the federal government. In regards to the social housing stock, the GNWT will need to evaluate how it will maintain both the public and homeownership programs and balancing what levels each can be sustained at given the continued need across the NWT and considering available recourses.

The ability to provide adequate, suitable, and affordable housing to NWT residents in need is rooted in strategic planning and adequate, sustainable funding. The federal government's recent approach of providing short-term funding for capital investments in housing, even though the need is going up, results in significant risk to P/T for the ongoing, long-term operation of housing programs. The federal government has been reluctant to engage the P/T through the Housing Ministers' Forum in any discussions relating to predictable, longer-term funding arrangements or alternative approaches to housing delivery.

Without a renewed federal commitment to housing and increased funding to social housing in the NWT, the need will increasingly continue to outstrip the supply of adequate, suitable, affordable housing for NWT residents. This not only includes new construction, but also includes improving the condition and the long-term viability of existing social housing stock, addressing specific unique areas of housing need (including seniors, persons with disabilities, Aboriginal peoples and northern communities), as well as maintaining existing programs and developing new housing programs that meet the GNWT's housing priorities and adjust to the housing needs of NWT residents.

Housing Delivery in Rural and Remote Communities

The results of the 2009 *NWT Community Survey – Housing Component* highlight the clear difference in need in smaller rural and remote communities. The NWTHC's Headquarters and District Offices will continue to work with the LHOs and the communities to approach the needs of each community in proactive and innovative ways in order to address the unique needs of each community.

It is anticipated that the evaluation of *Housing Choices* and the work that NWTHC will be doing with the NWT Bureau of Statistics will assist the NWTHC in continuing to refine its programs to meet housing challenges specific to each NWT community. The GNWT/ NWTHC will also need to consider how to deliver housing to those that do not qualify for homeownership programs in

communities where the *Public Housing Program* is not delivered, and where income levels and economic opportunities are not such that homeownership is a viable shelter option for many residents.

Through the Shelter Policy process, the NWTHC will be seeking options to meet the housing needs of residents in the smallest communities in the NWT. Possible solutions may include unique program offerings specific to smaller communities or the development of territorial-funded public housing programs in communities where CMHC-supported public housing is not available.

Future Housing Design ("Housing by Northerners for Northerners")
The NWTHC remains focused on developing housing designs that are truly created "by Northerners for Northerners". To this end, it has been working with CMHC on a design that is suited to the uniqueness and harshness of the northern climate, is sustainable and highly energy efficient, and that is culturally appropriate for the local community. Involvement of the communities in design charettes, held by the NWTHC and CMHC, has resulted in valuable input in the design process by NWT residents.